



# City of Greenbelt

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Date: 1/17/2017**

**Contact: Department of Public Works**

The Department of Public Works and the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship Project sponsored a tree protection volunteer event in Buddy Attick Park on Monday, January 16 in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. A group of 42 volunteers and 3 Public Works employees made it a day on, not a day off by contributing to the National Day of Service at Buddy Attick Park. This service-learning opportunity brought individuals, families, and volunteer groups of all ages and backgrounds together to make a positive impact on the environment by protecting trees from beaver herbivory and English ivy takeover.

Volunteers met inside of the Public Works Department for orientation. Connor Roessler, Chesapeake Conservation Corps Member, kicked off the event by describing the legacy of MLK Jr. and volunteer roles in co-existing with beavers. Beavers are famously busy. They are second only to humans in their ability to manipulate and change their environment. The City of Greenbelt co-exists with beavers by protecting slow-growth native trees and leaving nonnative trees uncaged for use as a food source and building material for lodges. Beavers are a keystone species by maintaining habitats that are relied on by many others. For example, beavers create standing dead wood which is inhabited by insects, and in turn attracts bird life.

Roessler's presentation also covered the importance of liberating trees from invasive species. English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is native to Europe and was introduced into North America by early settlers for ornamental purposes. It grows both along the ground, where it can displace native understory species, and in the tree canopy, often covering branches and harming trees.

Once the orientation was over, volunteers walked to the shoreline of Greenbelt Lake for a tree caging demonstration led by Brian Townsend, Horticulture Supervisor. Then, tools and equipment were distributed so volunteers could start protecting trees. An estimated fifty (50) trees were protected from beavers by volunteers placing wire caging around the trunks. Ten (10) of those tree trunks were re-caged to make available space for tree growth and expansion. About forty five (45) trees were liberated from English ivy using hand shears. Participants reflected that they enjoyed learning, working together as a team, and making a positive impact on the environment in honor of the MLK, Jr. National Day to Serve.

The event was sponsored by the City of Greenbelt Department of Public Works and the Greenbelt Forest Stewardship Project. Thanks to Bagel Place Bagels of College Park for donating bagels. Special thanks to the Islamic Relief USA volunteer group for participating in the City of Greenbelt MLK Jr. Day of Service for the second year in a row. The importance of volunteers cannot be understated as they play a key role in caring for our remnant woods.

The next tree protection volunteer event will take place on Presidents' Day on Monday, February 20 from 10:30 AM – 1 PM at Buddy Attick Park, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Meet inside of Public Works for orientation and training. Remember to dress warm and to wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. RSVP at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084fa4ad2ba3f58-city3>. Contact Connor Roessler at [croessler@greenbeltnmd.gov](mailto:croessler@greenbeltnmd.gov) or 240-542-2150 for more information.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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